

REMARKS

Claim rejection under 35 USC §112

Claim 12 was rejected as being indefinite by use of the limitation "the facilities" in lines 5-7.

Claim 12 has now been amended in the manner which overcomes the objection.

Claim rejection under 35 USC §102 & §103

Claims 8 and 12 stand rejected under 35 USC §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0035497 to Mazereeuw.

Claims 8 and 12 also stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,754,003 to Thomson in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,615,367 to Unkle.

For the reasons set forth hereafter, it is submitted that claims 8 and 12, as amended, are patentable.

Patentability of the Claims

The present invention relates to power generating facilities to follow or monitor the output of the power generating facilities against the load commands thereon so that the plurality of power generating facilities is effectively managed. Independent claims 8 and 12 have been amended to recite that the present invention relates to power generating facilities rather than power supplying facilities.

More specifically, the present invention solves particular problems created under the conditions of fluctuations or changes of the loads to be required and fluctuations or changes of the outputs of the respective power generating facilities as well as inconveniences caused at any one of the power generating facilities so that the power generating facility is suitably managed.

More particularly, the present invention defined in method claim 8 includes the steps of receiving information of a failure which has occurred in at least one of the power generating facilities, through communication means, according to operation information of the power generating facilities, selecting a repairing period and procedure for the failure, from repairing periods and procedures which are predetermined according to levels of failures, and outputting an instruction to control the operation of at least one of the power generating facilities other than the power generating facility in which the failure has occurred, according to the selected repairing and procedure.

According to the present invention defined in method claim 8, when a problem or failure at any one of the power generating facilities, since the conditions or states of such a power generating facility are diagnosed and confirmed rapidly so that commands are given to the other power generating facilities, it is possible to perform suitable operation and management of electric power network groups having a plurality of the power generating facilities.

The present invention defined in system claim 12 includes the elements of a database storing operation data obtained while the power generating facilities are in normal operating states and operation data obtained while the power generating

facilities are in abnormal states, an error supervision/diagnosis means which compares actual operation data of the power generating facilities operation data stored in the database, checks for any operation error, and outputs failure information when finding an operation error, a fault judge means which determines the level of failure from the output failure information, and an operation scheduling means which shows a predetermined repairing period and procedure selected according to the determined failure level.

According to the present invention defined in claim 12, when a problem or failure occurs at any one of the power generating facilities, since the conditions or state of such a power generating facility are diagnosed and confirmed rapidly so that commands are given to the other power generating facilities, it is possible to perform suitable operation and management of electric power network groups having a plurality of power generating facilities.

With respect to the 35 USC §102(e) rejection of claims 8 and 12 over Mazereeuw '497, Mazereeuw relates to a system and method for management of utility enterprises and relates to electric power transmission and distribution. Mazereeuw also discloses a technique for securing the predetermined voltage and current values. Mazereeuw differs entirely from the subject matter of the present invention. As previously noted, claims 8 and 12 have been amended to refer to power generating facilities as distinguish from power supplying facilities such as the utilities referred to in Mazereeuw. Mazereeuw mainly relates to the remote monitoring/diagnosis, such as remote supervisory control, of transmission and distribution facilities as shown in Fig. 1 of the reference.

As recognized by the Examiner on page 4 of the Office Action, Mazereeuw teaches monitoring a utility sub-station rather than a utility generator. The problems, techniques and diagnosis concerned with power generating system are quite different than those used in connection with monitoring a utility sub-station. The present invention relates to the remote monitoring of power generating facilities, and therefore claims 8 and 12 as amended, are not anticipated by Mazereeuw.

With respect to the rejection of claims 8 and 12 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Thomson '003 in view Unkle '367, Thomson discloses power generating quality maintenance in the same plant. Thomson does not disclose the selecting of the repairing and the processing contents required according to fault levels as set forth in claims 8 and 12.

The Unkle reference discloses a method and apparatus for diagnosing difficult to diagnose failures in a complex system of a machine. Unkle teaches a technique for diagnosing the failures of a locomotive and also relates to failure management. Accordingly, Unkle relates to only a specific apparatus and the diagnosing technique therefore. Moreover, Unkle does not relate to a technique in which it monitors whether an abnormality causes the machine and apparatus to fail. There is no consideration at all in Unkle about the actions or remedies in a case in which performance etc., of the subject matter is only lower.

Accordingly, even if the teachings of Thomson '003 and Unkle '367 are combined, the present invention is not rendered obvious or otherwise unpatentable.

In addition, there is no suggestion in either of the Thomson or Unkle of combining their teaching in the manner done so by the Examiner. Accordingly, it is

submitted that claims 8 and 12, as amended, are patentably distinguish over this combination of references.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants contend that the above-identified application is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration and reexamination are requested.

To the extent necessary, the applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, or credit any overpayment of fees, to the deposit account of MATTINGLY, STANGER, MALUR & BRUNDIDGE, P.C., Deposit Account No. 50-1417 (NIP-219-03).

Respectfully submitted,

MATTINGLY, STANGER, MALUR & BRUNDIDGE, P.C.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Gene W. Stockman", is written over a horizontal line.

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